



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

MALDIVES

[Check Against Delivery]

Statement by
His Excellency Dr Abdulla Khaleel,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives
at the
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Madam President,
Mr Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On the twenty-first of this month, we marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Maldives joining the United Nations.

Over the last sixty years, we have placed our confidence in this institution and in the multilateral system it represents: a promise that sovereignty matters, borders are respected, and every country—small or large—has an equal voice in shaping our shared future.



That confidence was never naïve.

It rested on the conviction that laws restrain might, and rules hold firm against coercion.

But assurances endure only when the rules-based order is upheld.

When it is breached without accountability, we lose more than order; we lose faith in the system itself.

And when faith collapses, it is not peace that fills the void.

It is unrestrained might: power that redraws boundaries, silences voices, and tramples norms.

This is the erosion we confront — three fault-lines in the global order.

First, the taboo against conquest.

For many decades, the rule that borders cannot be changed by force underwrote peace.

That foundation is cracking.

Every breach, once allowed, becomes precedent.

And precedent invites repetition.

Second, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These are not slogans, but the ground rules for peace, development, and dignity.

But today, powerful aggressors treat them as optional.



Third, multilateralism—the doctrine that shared challenges require shared solutions.

That doctrine is under siege.

When institutions are bypassed, when vetoes paralyze, when laws are applied selectively, confidence unravels—and with it, the system itself.

We see this erosion everywhere.

In Palestine—especially Gaza—Israel’s ongoing genocide has killed more than 66,000 civilians—more than a half of that: women and children.

In the West Bank, settler violence intensifies – trying to force more Palestinians out, and annex more land.

Israel has wilfully, shamelessly, and repeatedly, violated international law.

It has defied hundreds of resolutions of the Security Council and this Assembly.

It has rejected the decisions of the International Court of Justice and sanctioned the International Criminal Court.

People killed while begging for food.

Mothers holding lifeless babies.

Children staring blankly at the ruins of their homes and their futures.

These are the images that you simply cannot forget and move past.



And the sheer hypocrisy is...

This genocide is sustained by weapons and money from the very countries that claim to defend human rights—the same countries that helped define the very norms and laws being broken.

By their actions, they refuse to see Palestinians as equal human beings, deserving of life, dignity, and freedom.

This complicity is **the shame of the century**.

Let me be clear.

Famine can never be a weapon of war.

Innocents must not be mercilessly maimed, arbitrarily jailed, and ruthlessly killed.

The assault on sovereignty is equally clear in Israel's recent illegal attacks against Qatar, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Tunisia, and Iran.

Each strike is a reminder that borders are trampled when power speaks louder than law.

In each case,

Where laws and norms give way to leverage;

Where responsibility gives way to convenience:

The pattern is the same.

If this erosion continues, the question will no longer be *whether* it will happen again, but *who* will be the next victim.



UN80 must be the repair moment—the turning point.

Reform is no longer optional; it is the only path forward.

Any serious reform must tackle the Security Council's paralysis.

We need an expanded and more representative Council.

A rotating seat for SIDS is where we must start.

We need a Council that is transparent in its deliberations and accountable in its decisions to the membership and to itself.

We need a Council that does not hide under the threat of veto.

The Secretary-General's three-track reform should be Member State-led, Member-State driven, and implementation-focused.

It should enhance the UN's presence – especially in SIDS.

It should align mandates and secure predictable development finance.

It should ensure sufficient programme delivery staff.

“Realignment” must not mean less, but better service and better support.

We must also confront another imbalance.

The United Nations should exemplify equality.

But the shameful reality is that it has never had a female Secretary-General. The time has come to correct that.



Reform is not only about structures; it is about credibility.

And credibility lives or dies with trust in multilateralism.

That trust is eroding—and unless we act, the institutions built to uphold our system will weaken further.

If the UN cannot act to prevent, to protect, and to provide, . . . trust in multilateralism will continue to erode.

UN80 must repair the guardrails before they fail beyond repair.

Repair also begins with the global commons—the ultimate test of whether law and multilateralism still matter.

A decade ago, this Assembly adopted three foundational documents.

But today, the 2030 Agenda is off track;

The promise of Paris is broken.

And the Addis Ababa Action Agenda lies unfulfilled.

The climate emergency deepens, as major emitters evade their responsibility to cut emissions, and to pay for loss and damage inflicted on countries like mine - the Maldives.

Similarly, under the crushing weight of external debt, creditors and institutions tighten the vise, stripping developing economies of the fiscal space needed for resilience, health, and education.



There are promises worth keeping.

The BBNJ Agreement, entering into force next January, must be universally ratified and fully implemented—with benefit-sharing, technology transfer, and capacity-building that are real, predictable, and accessible to SIDS.

Commitments from the UN Ocean Conference and the Financing for Development Conference must translate into tangible gains for our islands—and above all, deliver debt relief.

The global financial architecture must deliver deeper, faster, fairer restructuring; scale up concessional finance for SIDS; and ensure that climate finance is additional, predictable, and aligned with adaptation needs.

We do not need to look far for solutions.

The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda provides the roadmap for SIDS to achieve resilient prosperity.

But it requires building economic resilience;
scaling up climate action and support;
accelerating biodiversity protection;
conserving and sustainably using the ocean;
and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction.



The upcoming World Social Summit in Doha must renew the social contract.

A clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, decent work, universal social protection, and inclusion are not privileges; they are rights.

Human rights must never be wielded as tools for political or diplomatic leverage. They must be a means to relieve suffering and support communities.

The Maldives will continue to champion core human rights values, including climate justice, gender equality, and the voices of youth.

We will continue to be a voice for Small Island Developing States—too often excluded, unheard, and ignored.

We advocate for reform abroad by taking responsibility at home.

Maldives 2.0 is our blueprint for change. It is reshaping governance, digitizing services, and building an inclusive, future-ready economy, so every child, on every island, has the same chance to thrive.



Health is central. We have banned vaping devices, e-cigarettes, and tobacco for the next generation. We are bringing NCD treatment into communities, expanding mental health care, and preparing for the realities of an ageing population.

Young people are at the heart of our choices. We are broadening access to skills and vocational training, opening new pathways into work, and creating space for them to build the future they imagine.

Sustainability anchors our development. Ocean accounts now guide how we protect biodiversity, while our Third NDC commits us to generating one-third of our electricity from renewable sources.

Innovation drives resilience. President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has positioned the Maldives as a hub for investment and ideas. The Maldives International Financial Centre will be the cornerstone, supported by competitive tax and regulatory incentives under our Special Economic Zones framework.

Geography is an asset we are determined to use. By investing in maritime, logistics, and trade gateways, we are placing the Maldives at the crossroads of global exchange.

And inclusion remains our promise. Content creators, entrepreneurs, and MSMEs—especially those led by women and persons with disabilities—will have the support they need to succeed. In doing so, we are not only building resilience at home but also contributing to a fairer and stronger global community.



The choice before us is stark.

Either we rebuild the foundations of law and norms—or reconcile ourselves to a world where might makes right.

Small states will be the first casualties of a lawless world.

But we will not be the only ones who suffer.

No state—small or large—will be safe.

In such a world, borders become bargaining chips, human rights become selective, and the global commons become a free-for-all.

We refuse to accept that fate.

At UN80, let us restore the taboo against conquest.

Let us renew respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Let us revitalize multilateralism—not as a talk shop, but as a system that acts with courage, clarity, and conviction.

If the rules stand, the small can stand.

And if the small can stand, all of us will stand taller.

Thank you.